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COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE WHOLE QUESTION OF PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS IN ALL THEIR ASPECTS

PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1996-1997

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.4/51/L.9

Statement submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Under the terms of operative paragraphs 1, 2, and 3 of draft resolution A/C.4/51/L.9, the General Assembly would:

(a) Welcome the report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (A/51/130);

(b) Endorse the proposals, recommendations and conclusions of the Special Committee contained in paragraphs 29 to 85 of its report;

(c) Urge Member States, the Secretariat and relevant organs of the United Nations to take all necessary steps to implement the proposals, recommendations and conclusions of the Special Committee.

2. In operative paragraph 4 of the draft resolution, the General Assembly would recommend that should any of the proposals contained in the resolution result in budgetary implications for the bienniums 1996-1997 and 1998-1999, such additional costs be accommodated with the appropriation levels approved by the General Assembly for those bienniums, in accordance with the Financial Regulations and Rules of the Organization.

3. The responsibility for determining the level and allocation of resources in the programme budget rests with the Fifth Committee. In that connection, attention is drawn to General Assembly resolution 45/248 B of 21 December 1990, as reaffirmed in subsequent resolutions of the Assembly on questions relating to the programme budget for each biennium, the most recent of which is resolution 50/214 of 23 December 1995. In section VI of resolution 45/248 B regarding procedures for administrative and budgetary matters, the Assembly:

(a) Reaffirmed that the Fifth Committee was the appropriate Main Committee of the General Assembly entrusted with responsibilities for administrative and budgetary matters;

(b) Reaffirmed the role of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions;

(c) Expressed its concern at the tendency of its substantive Committees and other intergovernmental bodies to involve themselves in administrative and budgetary matters;

(d) Invited the Secretary-General to provide all intergovernmental bodies with the required information regarding procedures for administrative and budgetary matters.

4. In addition, regulation 13.1 of the Financial Regulations of the United Nations provides that no Council, Commission or other competent body shall take a decision involving either a change in the programme approved by the General Assembly, or the possible requirements of expenditure unless it has received and taken account of a report from the Secretary-General on the programme budget implications of the proposal. No such report was provided to the Special Committee when it considered its report (A/51/130) earlier in 1996.

5. Therefore, pursuant to the aforementioned resolutions and the Financial Regulations of the United Nations, the implications arising from draft resolution A/C.4/51/L.9 are outlined in the following paragraphs.

6. It will be recalled that in adopting the programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997,[1] the General Assembly decided that the amounts under expenditure sections represented a provisional total of $2,712,265,200, and that the projected level of savings to be achieved during the biennium would be $103,991,200. The Assembly further decided that the total level of expenditures provided for in 1996-1997 would be $2,608,274,000. Taking into account, therefore, the reductions already proposed in A/C.5/50/57 and Add.1, the related requirements could not be absorbed within the total appropriation of $2,608 million granted by the General Assembly.

II. ANALYSES OF ACTIVITIES AND RESOURCES RESULTING FROM THE DRAFT RESOLUTION

7. The above requests relate to subprogramme 2, Peacekeeping operations, of programme 1, Good offices, preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peacekeeping, research and the collection and analysis of information, of the medium-term plan

for the period 1992-1997, as revised.[2] Resources related to activities under subprogramme 2 are funded from the regular budget, from the support account for peacekeeping operation and, in respect of each peacekeeping operation, from the budgets of those operations.

A. United Nations financing of posts currently occupied by officers on loan from Governments

8. The General Assembly, in its resolutions 45/258 of 3 May 1991 and 49/250 of 20 July, invited Member States to make voluntary contributions to the United Nations peacekeeping operations and welcomed the contribution by Member States, on a non-reimbursable basis, of personnel to fill backstopping positions within the Department for Peacekeeping Operations of the Secretariat.

9. In paragraph 47 of its report (A/51/130), the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations noted the growing imbalance within the Department of Peacekeeping Operations between posts financed from the regular budget and the support account for peacekeeping, and the number of military officers on loan. It further noted that the use of loaned personnel should be temporary and urged the Secretary-General and the competent bodies of the General Assembly to take steps to correct that imbalance by providing United Nations financing of posts at present occupied by officers on loan and by recruitment of those posts in accordance with established procedures. In that regard, the Special Committee stressed the view that the planning function of the Department's activities should receive regular and predictable financing. The Special Committee also noted the significant work accomplished by personnel provided by some Member States on loan to the Organization, including in specialized areas essential to support of peacekeeping operations, and requested the Secretary-General to ensure that the recruitment and use of loaned personnel was consistent with the requirements of Articles 100 and 101 of the Charter of the United Nations, including that due regard be paid to wide geographical representation.

10. In the context of the Secretary-General's proposal for the programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997, the conversion to the regular budget of 19 posts from the support account for peacekeeping operations was proposed. That proposal did not meet the approval of the General Assembly. It was thus not possible to address the imbalance between posts financed from the regular budget, the support account and the number of military officers on loan.

11. The Secretary-General would point out also that endorsement by the General Assembly of the Special Committee's recommendation to take steps to correct the imbalance regarding loaned personnel by providing for United Nations financing of those posts at present occupied by officers on loan and by recruitment for those posts in accordance with established procedures does not in and of itself give rise to programme budget implications. As to the recommendation related to the gratis personnel on loan from Governments, the Secretary-General will bring paragraph 47 of the Special Committee's report to the attention of the Fifth Committee in the context of its consideration of the report on the subject of gratis personnel prepared for the current session of the General Assembly (A/51/688 and Corr.1).

B. Lessons Learned Unit

12. In paragraph 50 of the report of the Special Committee, the Committee, inter alia, urged the Secretary-General, in view of the importance of the work of the Lessons Learned Unit, to seek regular, predictable financing for the Unit and to keep the Special Committee informed of its activities. The Special Committee considered it important that the work of the Unit be distributed to Member States and to the Special Committee for its consideration and urged the Secretariat to provide the already completed studies of the Lessons Learned Unit in all the official languages of the United Nations as soon as possible and in future to provide its studies in all the official languages in a timely fashion.

13. There are currently four staff assigned to the Lessons Learned Unit (two P-4, one P-3 and one General Service staff) funded from the Trust Fund for Support from Governments and Organizations to the Department of Peacekeeping Operation's Lessons-Learned Mechanism: one Coordination Officer (P-4), two Research Analysts (one P-4 and one P-3) and an Administrative Assistant at the General Service level. In this connection, the Special Committee's attention is drawn to General Assembly resolution 41/213 of 19 December 1986, in which the Assembly approved the recommendations contained in the report of the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts to Review the Efficiency of the Administrative and Financial Functioning of the United Nations.[3] Recommendation 62 of the Group states: "A serious effort should be made by the Secretary-General to discourage the present practice of transferring extrabudgetary posts to the regular budget."

14. The translation, reproduction and distribution of the already completed studies of the Lessons Learned Unit in all the official languages of the United Nations is estimated at $176,100. Since the Lessons Learned Unit is currently funded from voluntary contributions, the reports of the Unit should likewise be funded from voluntary contributions. This is in line with the established policy that the regular budget should not bear the costs of activities funded from voluntary contributions.

C. Civilian police

15. Paragraph 62 of the report of the Special Committee noted that the use of civilian police in United Nations peacekeeping operations continued to increase, welcomed the progress made in the past to strengthen the Civilian Police Unit within the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and urged the Secretary-General to strengthen the Unit further.

16. In order to meet the increasing demand for the participation of civilian police in United Nations peacekeeping operations, as well as their enhanced role in fostering the political reconciliation process and the promotion of peace between warring factions, the Secretary-General will address this issue in the context of future budgetary proposals, as appropriate.

D. Reimbursement of troop contributors

17. In paragraph 74 of its report, the Special Committee expressed concern over protracted delays in the reimbursement of troop contributors, including delays in the processing of claims for troops and equipment provided by Member States to operations whose mandates had been completed. It urged the Secretary-General to accord high priority to the early settlement of all pending claims and to ensure that all reimbursement took place in a timely fashion, inter alia, through the provision of an adequate level of personnel to those units of the Secretariat dealing with those issues.

18. There are currently 14 personnel, in addition to existing staff, on loan from Governments assigned to carry out functions related to troop-reimbursement activities. The future financing of such personnel may be considered in the context of the overall review of gratis personnel to be undertaken by the Fifth Committee as indicated above.

III. SUMMARY

19. In summary, the adoption of draft resolution A/C.4/51/L.9 endorsing the recommendations of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations does not in itself give rise to programme budget implications for the programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997. The Secretary-General will draw the attention of the Fifth Committee to all relevant paragraphs of the recommendations of the Special Committee when it considers the report on the subject of gratis personnel at this session of the General Assembly.

Notes

[1] Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Supplement No. 6 (A/50/6/Rev.1).

[2] Ibid., Forty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 6 (A/47/6/Rev.1), vol. I.

[3] Ibid., Forty-first Session, Supplement No. 49 (A/41/49).